

WRITER J.M. DEMATTEIS HAS WRITTEN FOR NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, TELEVISION, AND COMICS, WHERE HIS WORK ON TITLES RANGING FROM MARVEL'S SPIDER-MAN TO VERTIGO'S MOONSHADOW HAS RECEIVED BOTH POPULAR AND CRITICAL ACCLAIM.

ARTIST GLENN BARR'S VARIOUS STYLES HAVE APPEARED IN EVERYTHING FROM THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW TO THE COVERS OF FILM THREAT MAGAZINE, WITH ASSORTED COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS LIKE PIRANHA PRESS'S MARS ON EARTH IN BETWEEN.

BROOKLYN DREAMS IS THE FIRST BOOK IN THE PARADOX FICTION LINE, AN ONGOING SERIES OF UNIQUELY FORMATTED MULTIPART GRAPHIC NOVELS WRITTEN BY BOTH PROSE AND COMICS WRITERS, AND ILLUSTRATED BY A DIVERSE GROUP OF COMIC ART TALENTS. PARADOX FICTION IS DEDICATED TO PUBLISHING A BROAD RANGE OF GRAPHIC NOVELS, ALL WITH ONLY ONE PREREQUISITE — THAT EACH STORY TOUCHES THE HEARTS, THE SOULS, AND THE MINDS OF ITS READERS.

BROOKLYN

DREAMS

J.M. DEMATTEIS

ART BY

GLENN BARR

BOB LAPPAN

DOG DAYS

PARADOX PRESS

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PRINTED IN USA. FIRST PRINTING.



THIS IS THE STORY
OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ME
DURING MY SENIOR YEAR
IN HIGH SCHOOL.



NOW, EVERYTHING

I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU IS TRUE, I

SWEAR IT. BUT THE PROBLEM IS — I DON'T

REALLY BELIEVE THAT THERE'S ANY SUCH

THING AS A "TRUE STORY."

PERCEPTION IS LIMITED.

MEMORY IS FAULTY. I THINK THE

MOMENT THE WORDS COME OUT OF OUR

MOUTHS, WE CREATE SOMETHING WHOLLY

DIFFERENT FROM THE TRUTH WE'RE TRYING

TO COMMUNICATE. A SHADOW-SHOW

OF REALITY. A WAKING DREAM,

IF YOU WILL.







"THERE'S LITTLE
I ACTUALLY REMEMBER,"
SHE TELLS HIM, "SO I'LL
WEAVE YOU LIES
MORE ACCURATE
THAN TRUTH."









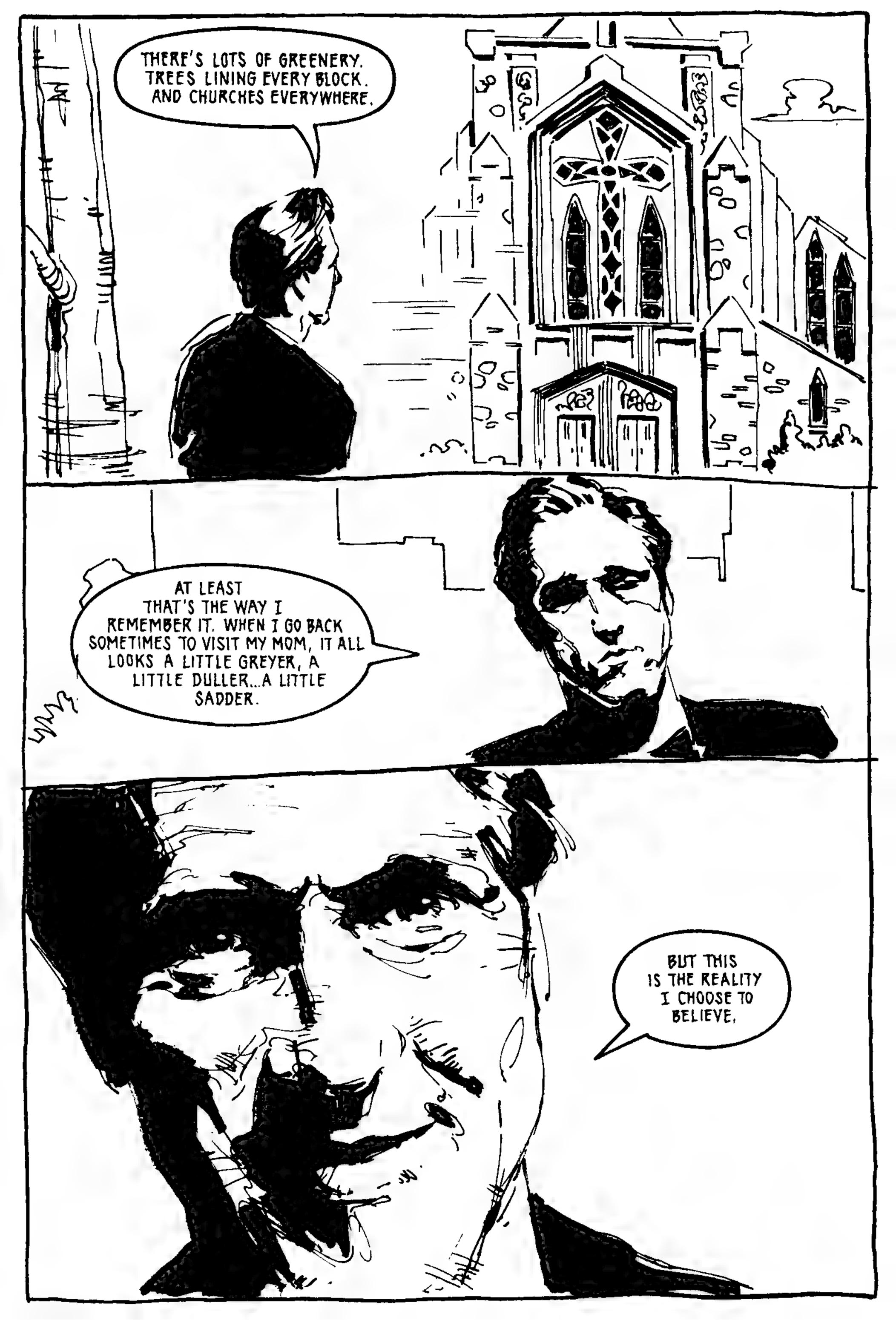




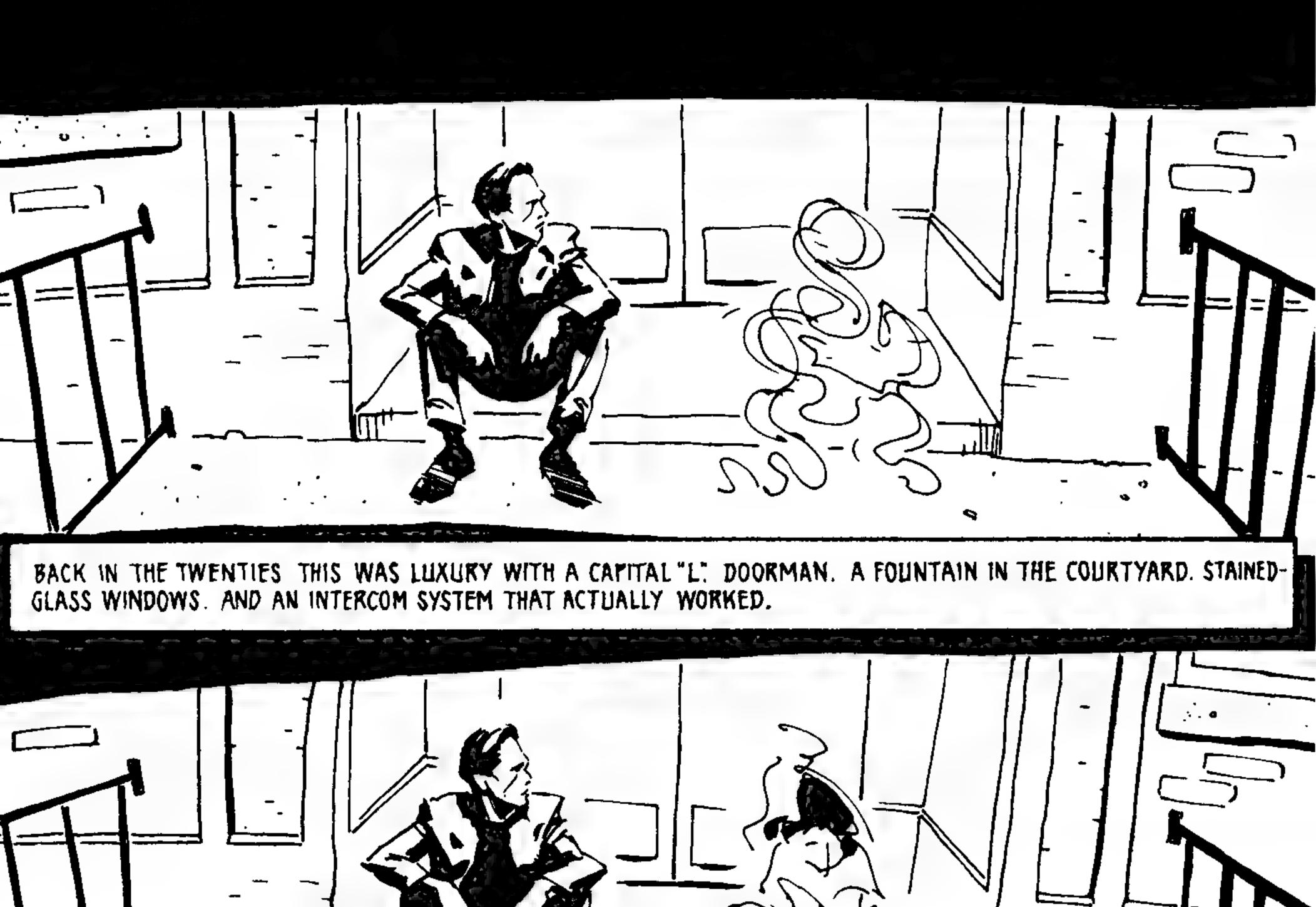








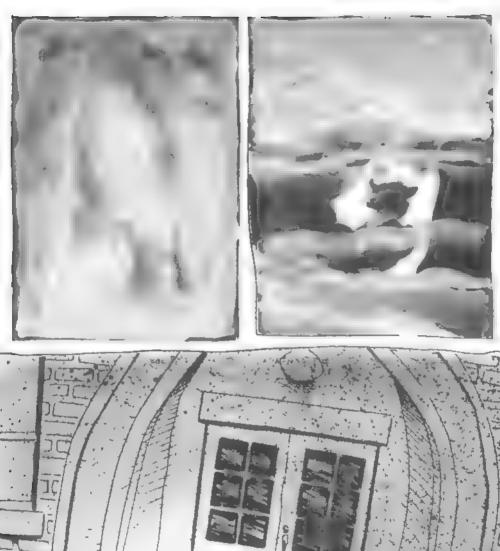




"PILGRIM COURT" WAS A LITTLE LESS MAJESTIC IN MY DAY, BUT IT WAS STILL A NICE BUILDING. CLEAN. WELL MAINTAINED. SPACIOUS APARTMENTS WITH SOLID WALLS. NOT LIKE THE CARDBOARD SHIT THEY MAKE NOW.









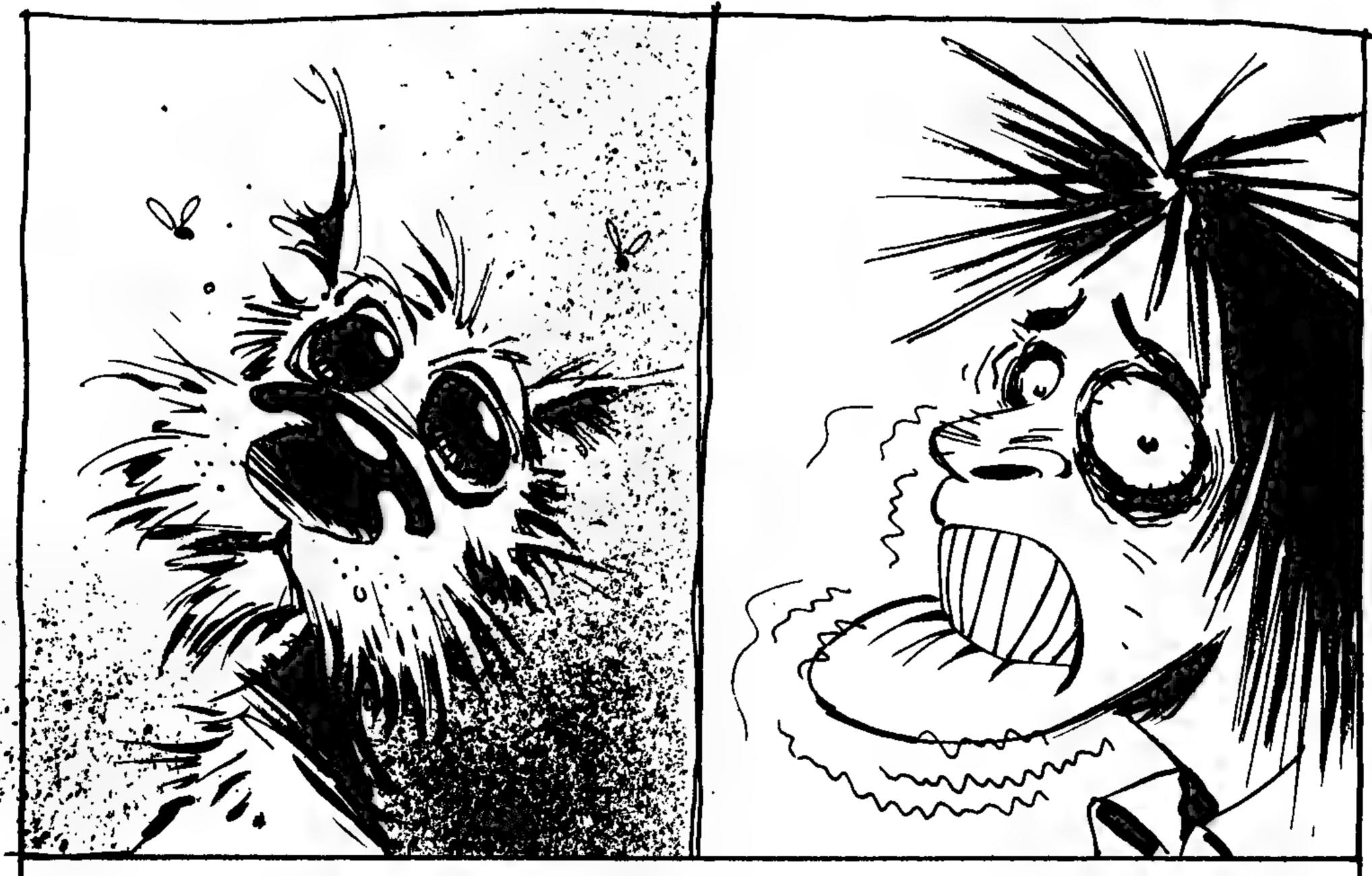




SO I'M SITTING THERE READING — AND THIS DIRTY, BROWN, BIG-EYED MUTT COMES BOPPING ALONG. I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE CAME FROM OR WHERE HE WAS GOING ——

UNFATHOMABLE REASON
I CAUGHT HIS ATTENTION.





NOW, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE NERVOUS AROUND STRAY DOGS. AND WITH GOOD REASON.







WE WERE LIVING IN THE WILLIAMSBURG SECTION OF BROOKLYN THEN...
... WE DIDN'T MOVE TO OCEAN AVENUE TILL I STARTED KINDERGARTEN.





EXPLAIN.











IT WAS ALL PART OF THE RITUAL: IF PHYLLIS SAID SHE'D BE COMING HOME AT MIDNIGHT --

















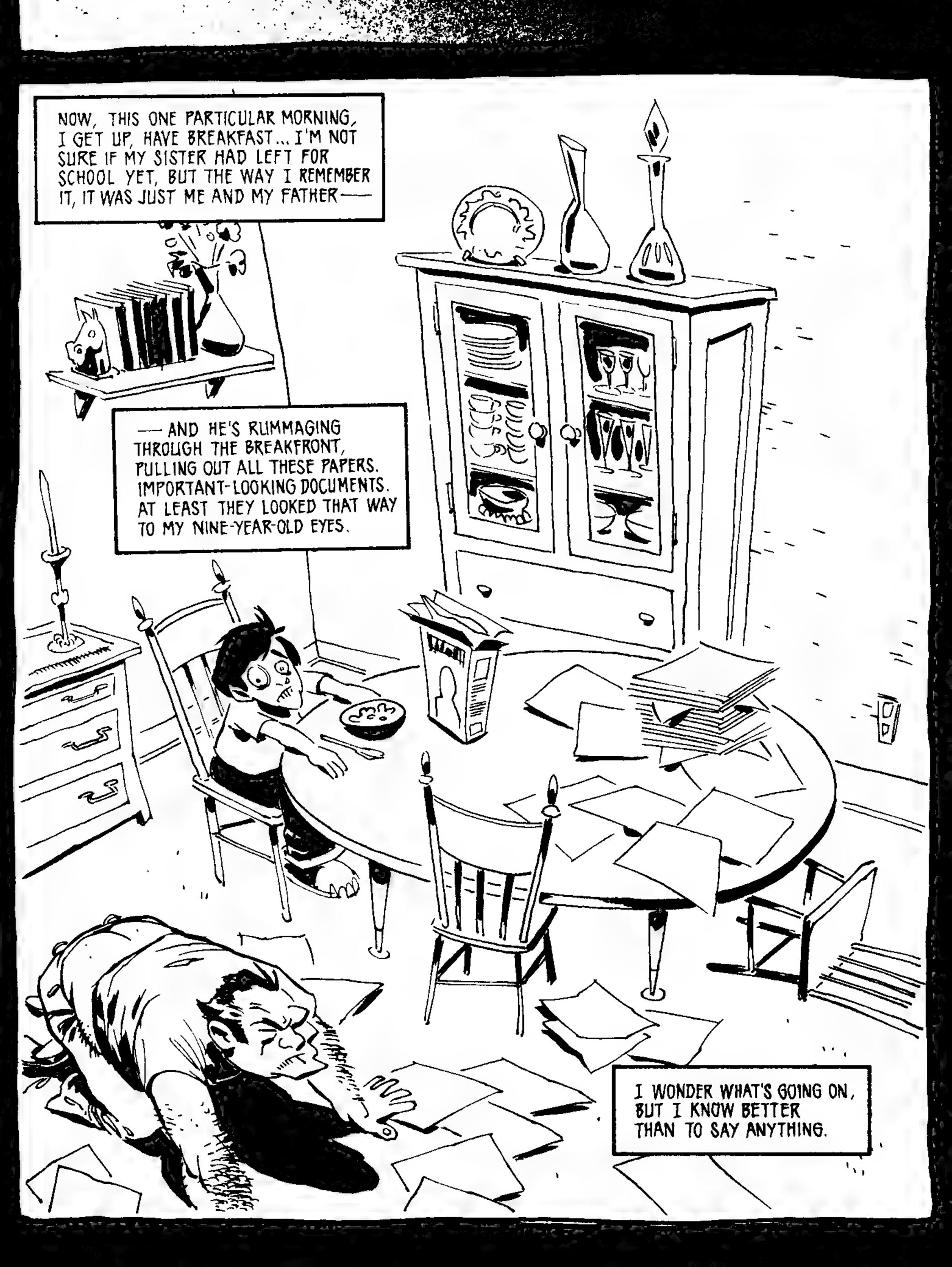


OH KIGHT THE DOG I'LL GET TO THAT IN A MINUTE BUT I THINK I'D BETTER SAY A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT MY FATHER FIRST PROBLEM IS, DOMINICK SANTINI .. GOD BLESS 'IM; HE DIED BACK IN B4 ISN'T AN EASY ONE TO PIN DOWN I MEAN, THIS WAS NOT A MAN WHOSE LIFE FOLLOWED ANY LOGICAL PATTERN ONE QUICK STORY TO CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF THE MAN-AND THEN I PROMISE THAT I'LL GET BACK TO THE DOG





ESTHER WOULD COME BACK LATER, OF COURSE.
SLEEP ON THE COUCH. AND THEN SHE'D BE UP
AND OUT TO WORK THE NEXT MORNING.













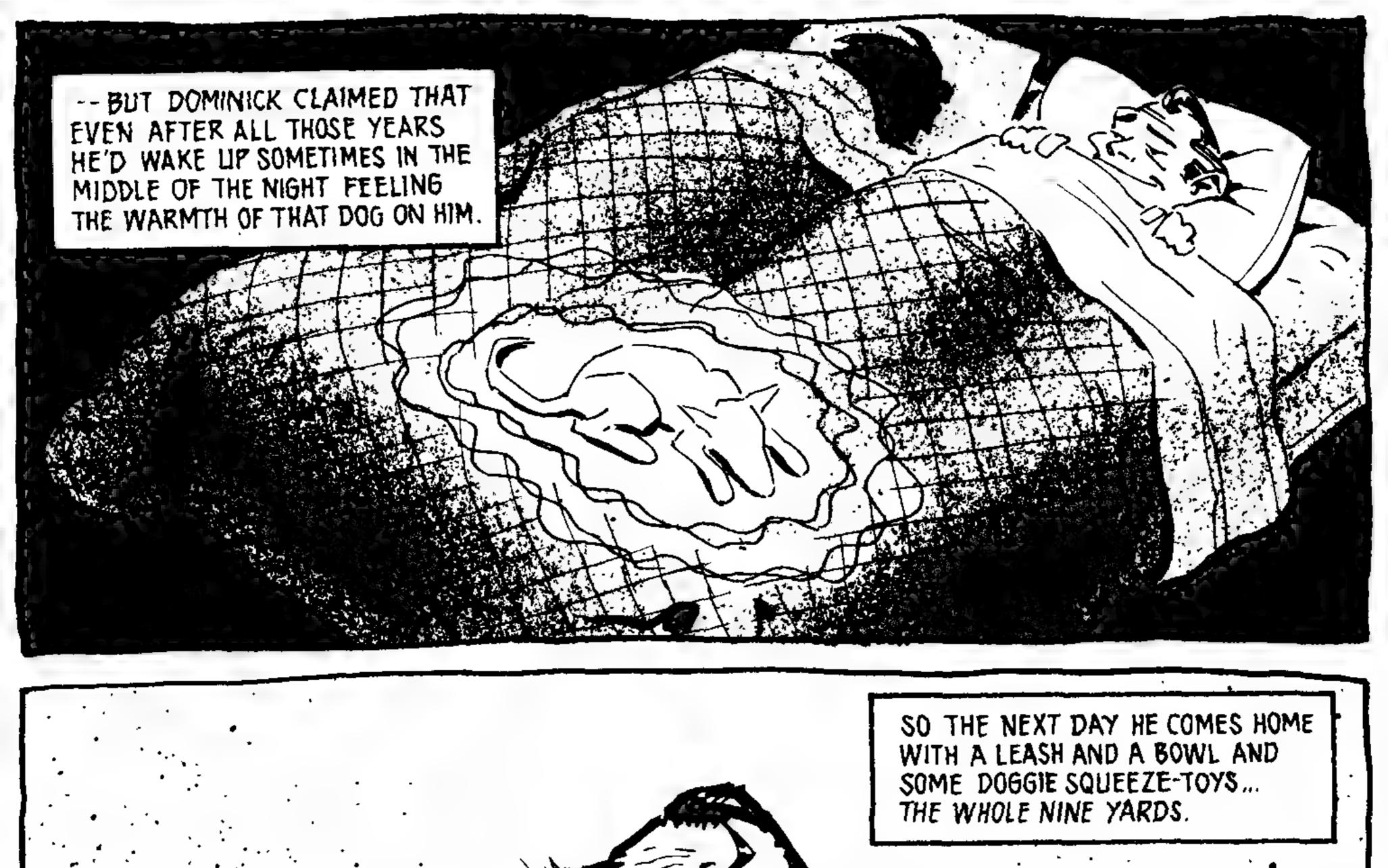


















SO "BILBO" S THERE UNDER THE BED — AND EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE HE IL STICK HIS HEAD OUT AND LOOK AROUND HE'S NOT REALLY SURE WRAT'S GO NG ON HE TRUSTS ME, BUT HE DOESN'T TRUST HIS NEW ENVIRONMENT

IT'S A N CE ENOUGH PLACE, AFTER H S TIME ON THE STREET I IMAGINE IT MUST HAVE SEEMED LINE PARADISE BUT HE HAD THIS ATTITUDE A LITTLE CAUTIOUS, A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS—BUT MOSTLY RESIGNED.

- LIKE HE'D BEEN THROUGH THIS BEFORE AND HE WAS JUST WAITING FOR THE ROOF TO CAVE IN I STAYED UP MOST OF THE NIGHT TALKING TO HIM SINGING HIM LITTLE SONGS DOING ANYTHING I COULD TO MAKE HIM FEEL AT HOME BUILD UP THAT TRUST

A COUPLE OF TIMES HE GOT THIS FUNNY LOOK ON HIS FACE — I COULD SEE A BODILY FUNCTION COMING FROM A MILE AWAY — SO I D DRAG HIM OUT FROM JNDER THE BED AND TAKE HIM DOWN FOR A WALK NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN

THEN HE D COME BACK JF AND PISS OR SHIT ON THE FLOOR AND SCOOT BACK UNDER THE BED

I THINK HE ENJOYED THAT

OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS, ESTHER, TO HER ETERNAL CREDIT, PUT UP A VALIANT STRUGGLE, HER INDULGENT NATURE PUSHED TO ITS ABSOLUTE LIMITS.

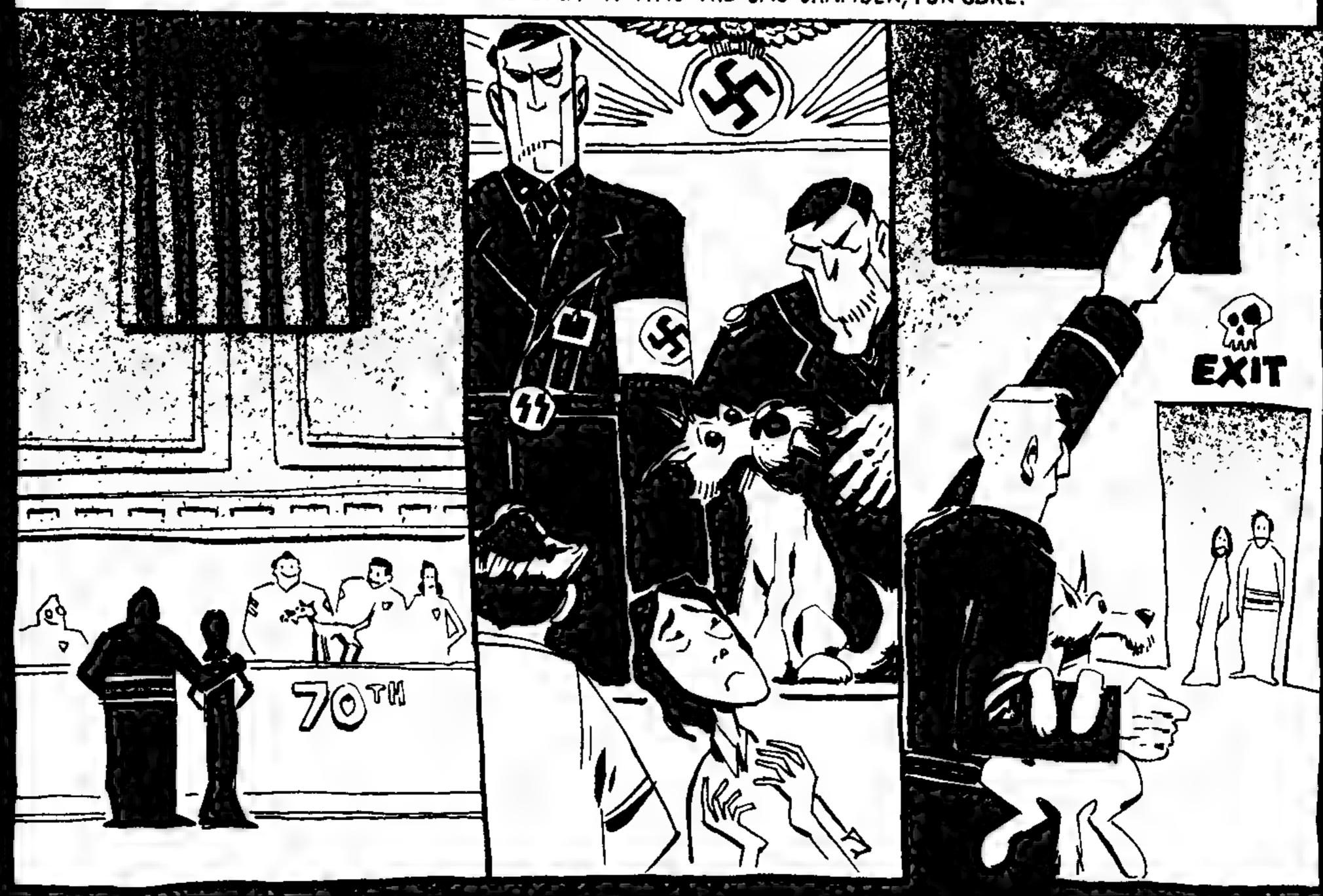


SHE REALLY TRIED. SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH U SCRATCH! SCRATCH 2 SEALCH 5CRATCH 4 CANCIN HATCH 4CRATLY SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH





YOU THINK I'M EXAGGERATING? LISTEN: THE ASPCA WAS OVERCROWDED. IF A DOG WASN'T ADOPTED WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK OR TWO, THAT WAS THE END. IT WAS THE GAS CHAMBER, FOR SURE.



I DUNNO. MAYBE I AM EXAGGERATING. MAYBE SOMEONE WALKED INTO THE ANIMAL SHELTER, HAD ONE LOOK AT THOSE EXQUISITE BROWN EYES, AND TOOK "BILBO" HOME. MAYBE HE LIVED A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE WITH A WONDERFUL FAMILY FAR MORE FUNCTIONAL THAN MINE WAS.



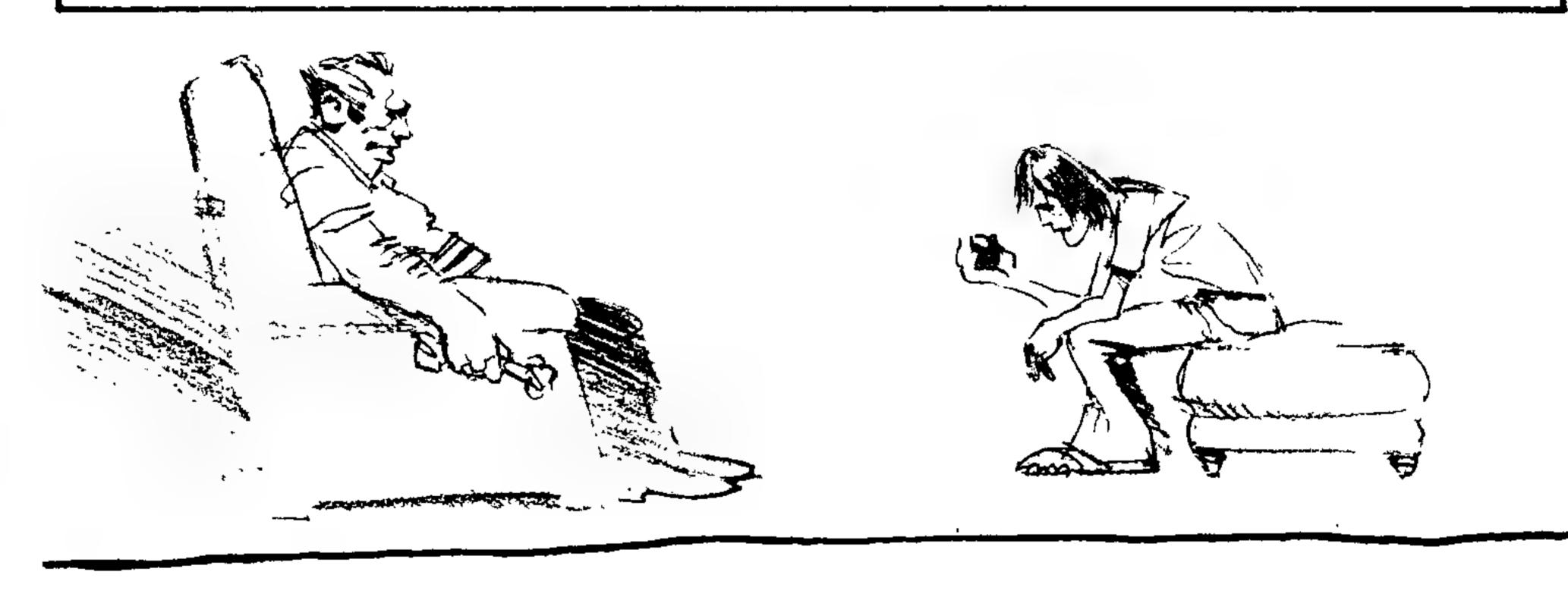


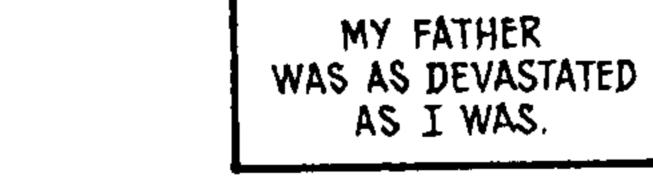


BUT I COLLON T GET HIS SMELL OFF ME



BUT THE THING THAT'S REALLY STAYED WITH ME ALL THESE YEARS...ALMOST MORE THAN "BILBO" HIMSELF...
IS THIS:









I SAID BEFORE THAT SOMETIMES I THINK "BILBO" MIGHT HAYE BEEN A KIND OF GLARD AN ANGEL — SENT DOWN TO IMPACT ON MY LIFE BLESS IT I GUESS . SPIN IT OFF ON A NEW COURSE

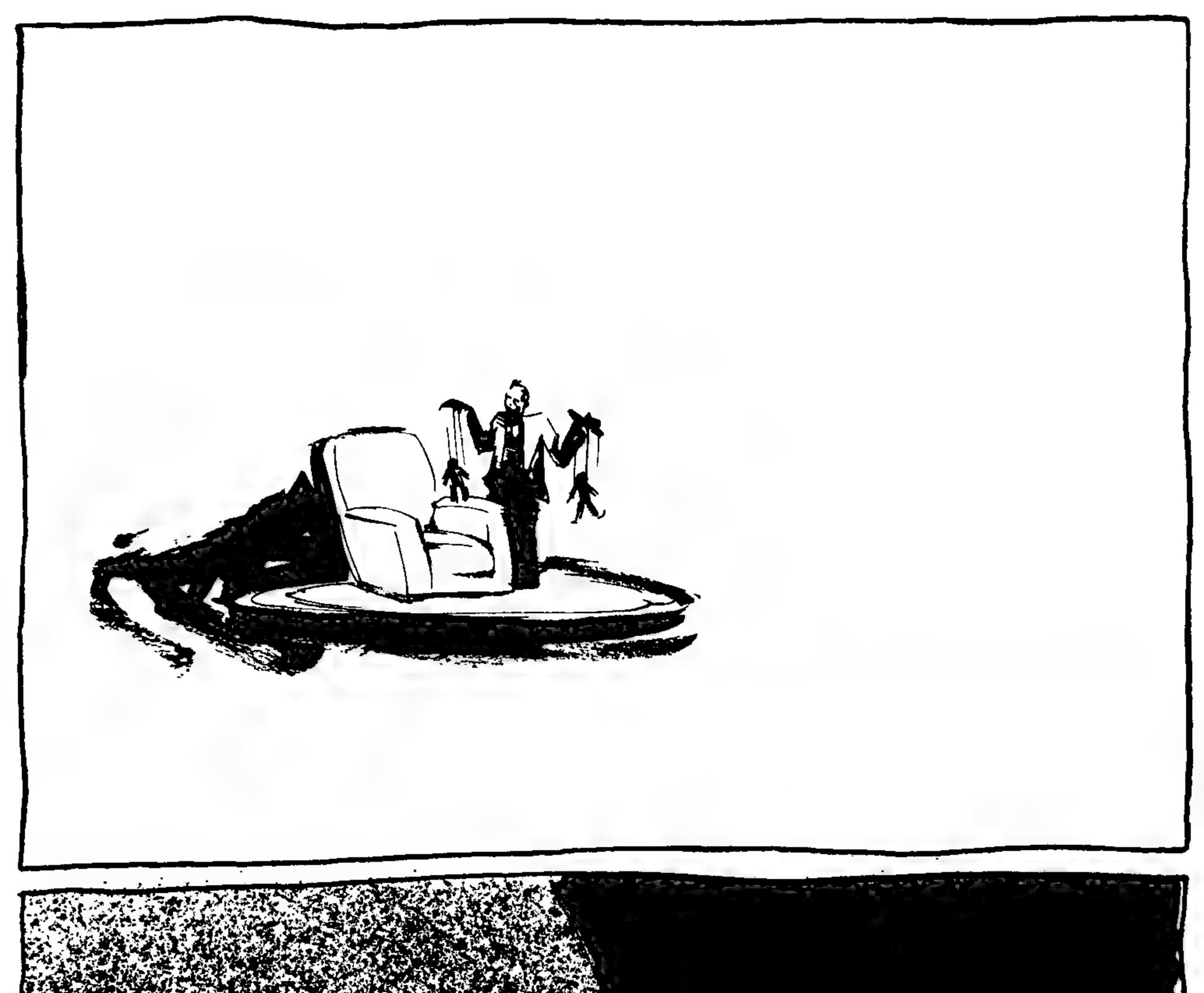


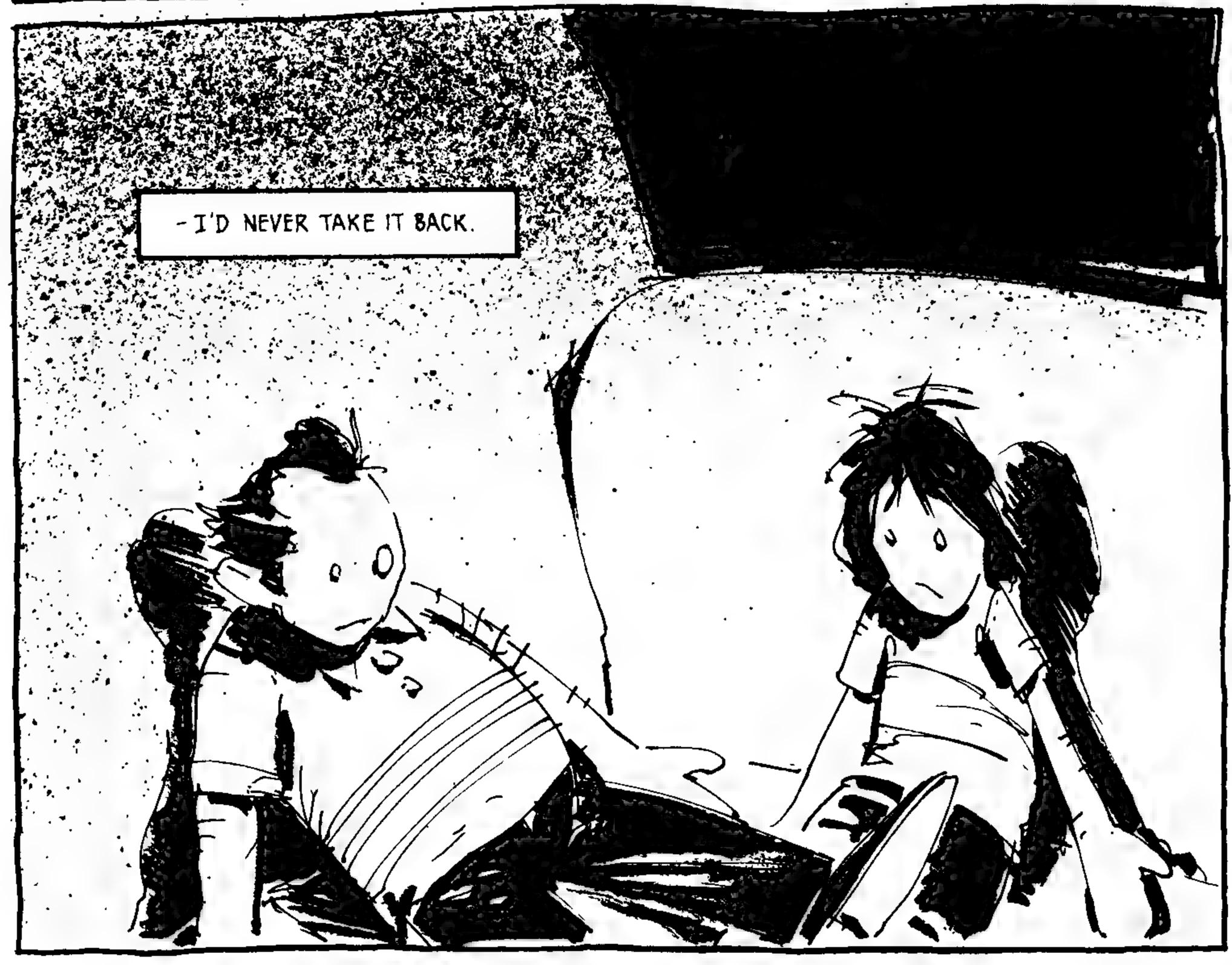


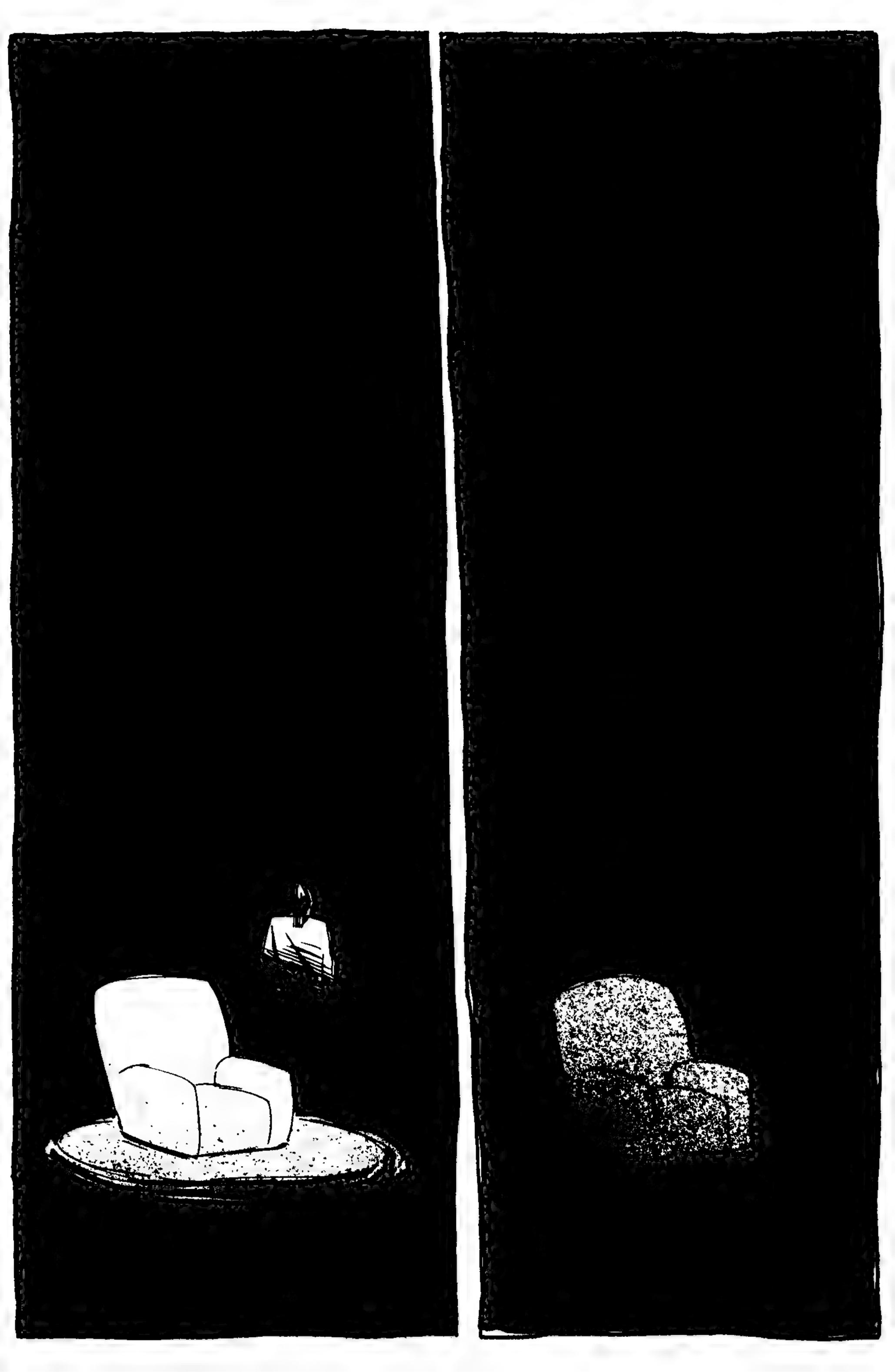


BECAUSE THE REST OF THAT YEAR WAS HARD FOR US WE DIDN'T SHARE VERY MUCH TO BE PERFECTLY HOMEST WE D'ON'T SHARE VERY MUCH IN ALL THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED



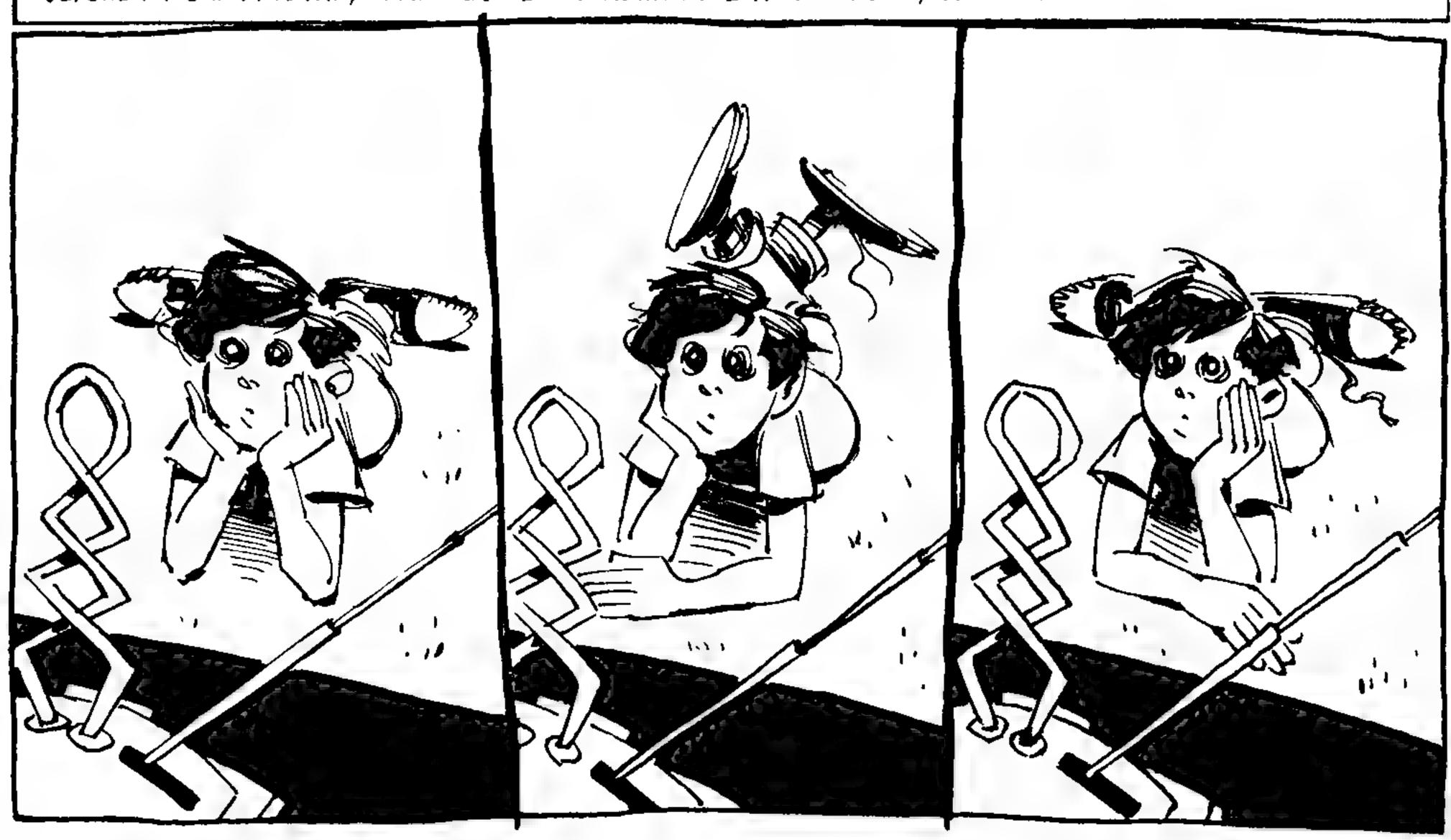






A COUPLE OF WEEKS INTO SENIOR YEAR— I GOT ARRESTED.

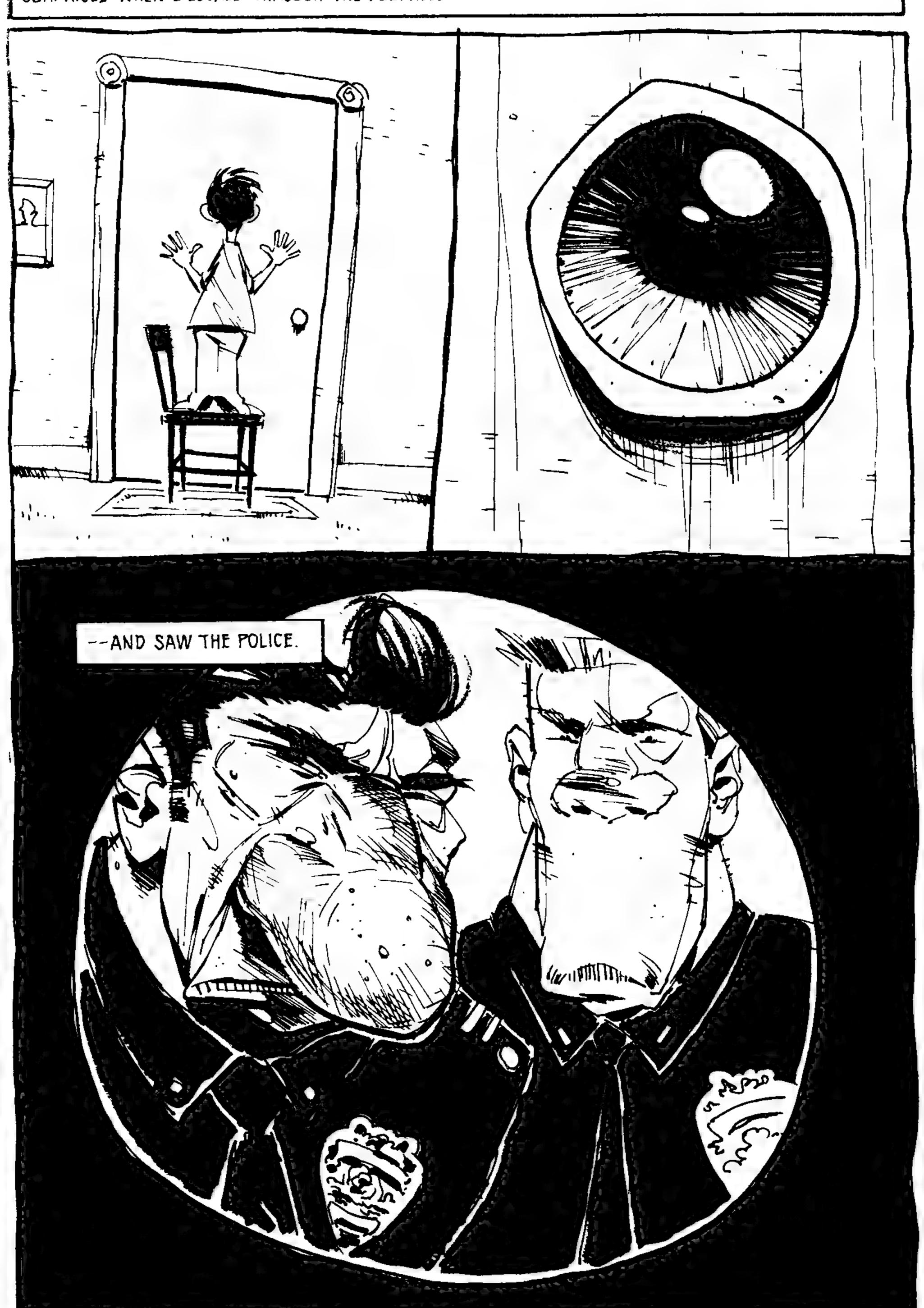
I'D HAD A STRANGE BRUSH WITH THE LAW ONCE BEFORE... I THINK I WAS ABOUT TWELVE OR THIRTEEN, IT WAS BEFORE MY BAR-MITZVAH, THAT MUCH I'M SURE... AND I WAS AT HOME, BY MYSELF.



MY PARENTS WERE OUT SHOPPING. PHYLLIS WAS OUT WITH ONE OF HER BOYFRIENDS.



THIS WASN'T YOUR ORDINARY KNOCK. THIS WAS THE KNOCK OF AUTHORITY. SO I WASN'T ALL THAT SURPRISED WHEN I LOOKED THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE --



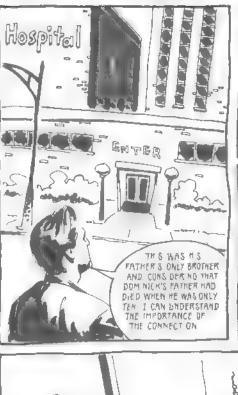
BUT WHAT DID SURPRISE ME WAS THAT THEY SAID THEY WERE LOOKING FOR ME: VINCENT SANTINI. THEY SAID THEY'D HAD A REPORT ABOUT DRUG DEALING GOING ON IN MY APARTMENT. AND THIS VINCENT SANTINI, THE REPORT SAID, WAS THE MAN RUNNING THE SHOW.



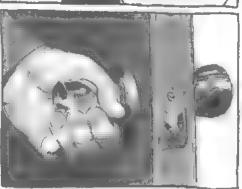














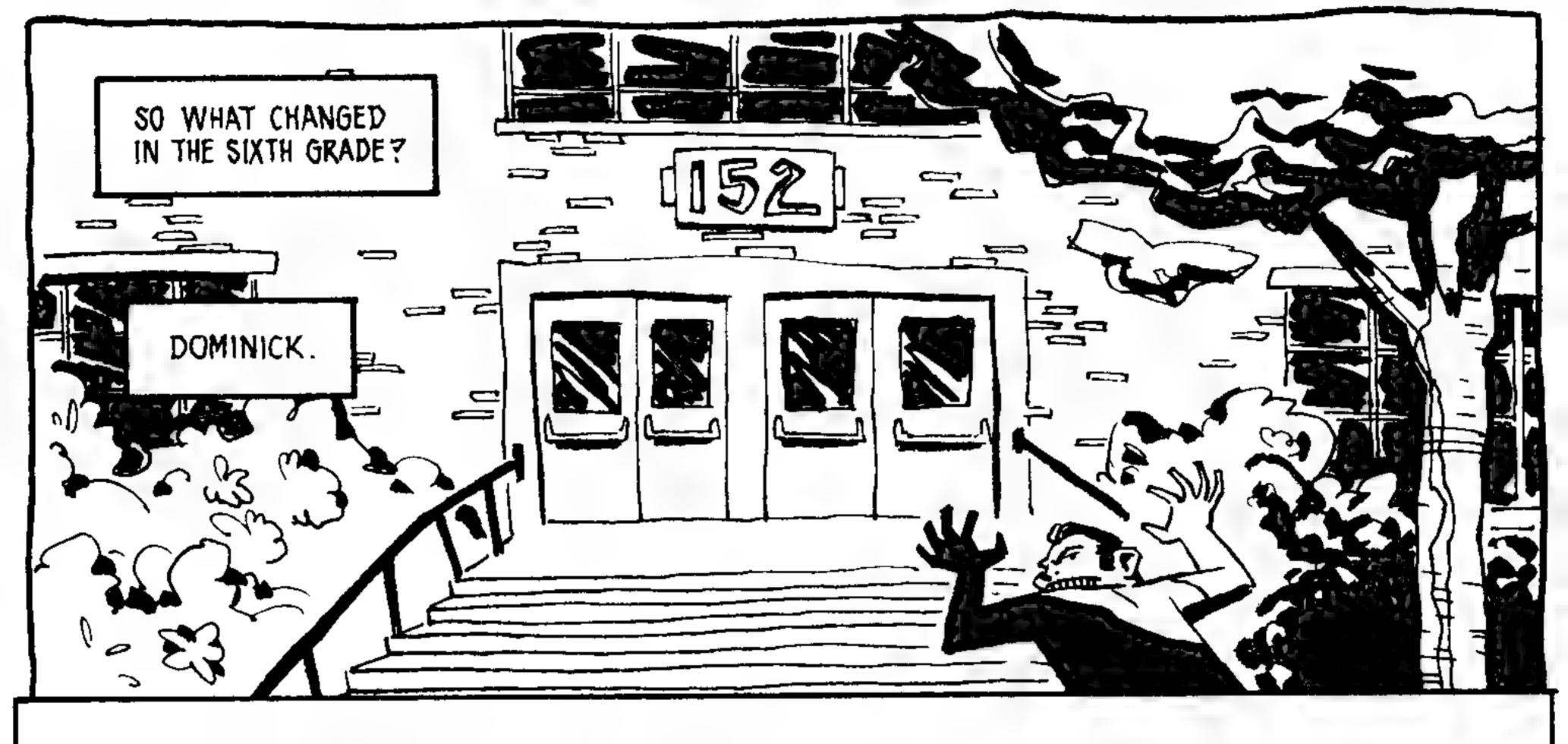






THEIR EFFECT ON MY FATHER MUST HAVE BEEN FORMIDABLE

BECAUSE DESPITE WHAT IT SAID ON THAT DOCUMENT I BEJEVED — UNTIL THE SIXTH GRADE, ANYWAY—THAT MY LEGAL NAME WAS CARL VINCENT SANTINI EVERYONE — MY FATHER MY ITALIAN RELATIVES, FYEN GREAT LINCLE VINCENT HIMSELF — CALLED ME CARL



AFTER ELEVEN YEARS OF HUMILIATION, HE'D HAD ENOUGH. HE MARCHED UP TO SCHOOL ONE DAY, PULLED ME OUT OF CLASS, DRAGGED ME TO THE OFFICE AND ANNOUNCED TO THE CLERK —— AND TO ME! —— THAT MY NAME WAS NOT CARL VINCENT SANTINI... IT WAS VINCENT CARL SANTINI!

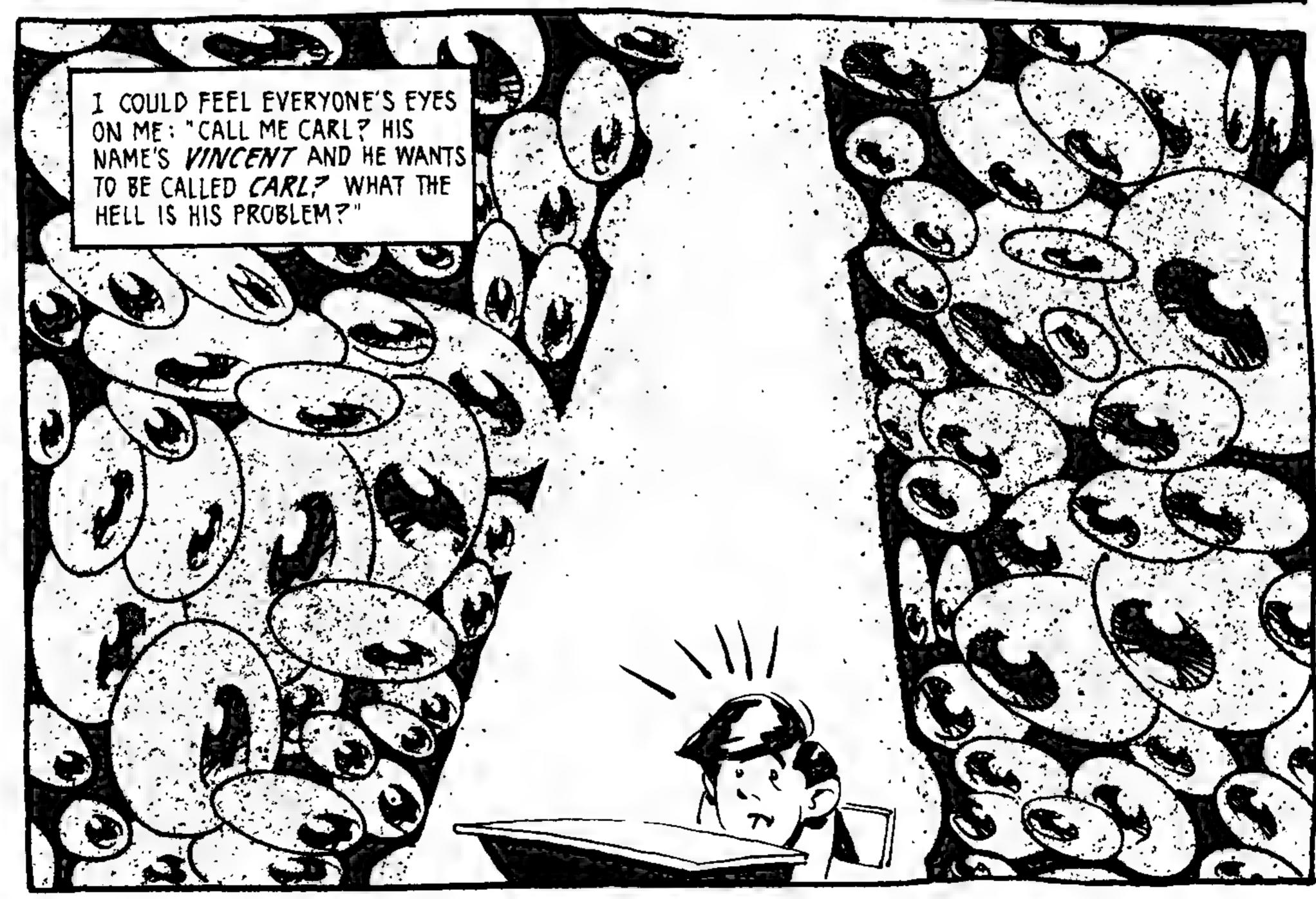


AND THEY DID: FROM THEN ON, I WAS "OFFICIALLY" VINCENT SANTINI. AND, THE FIRST DAY OF EVERY YEAR, IN EVERY NEW CLASS, WHEN THEY'D TAKE ATTENDANCE AND CALL MY NAME:



I'D RAISE MY HAND ... EMBARRASSED BEYOND WORDS ... AND SAY:







CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?
TWELVE YEARS OLD AND
I ALREADY HAD AN ALIAS!
2

Y'KNOW, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THOSE COPS WEREN'T WEARING UNIFORMS. THEY WERE PLAIN-CLOTHES DETECTIVES. OR AT LEAST THEY CLAIMED TO BE.



TERRIFIED AS I WAS --- AND I WAS ALREADY IN TEARS; I'M AMAZED I DIDN'T PISS IN MY PANTS --- I WASN'T STUPID. I ASKED THEM TO SHOW ME SOME 1.D.















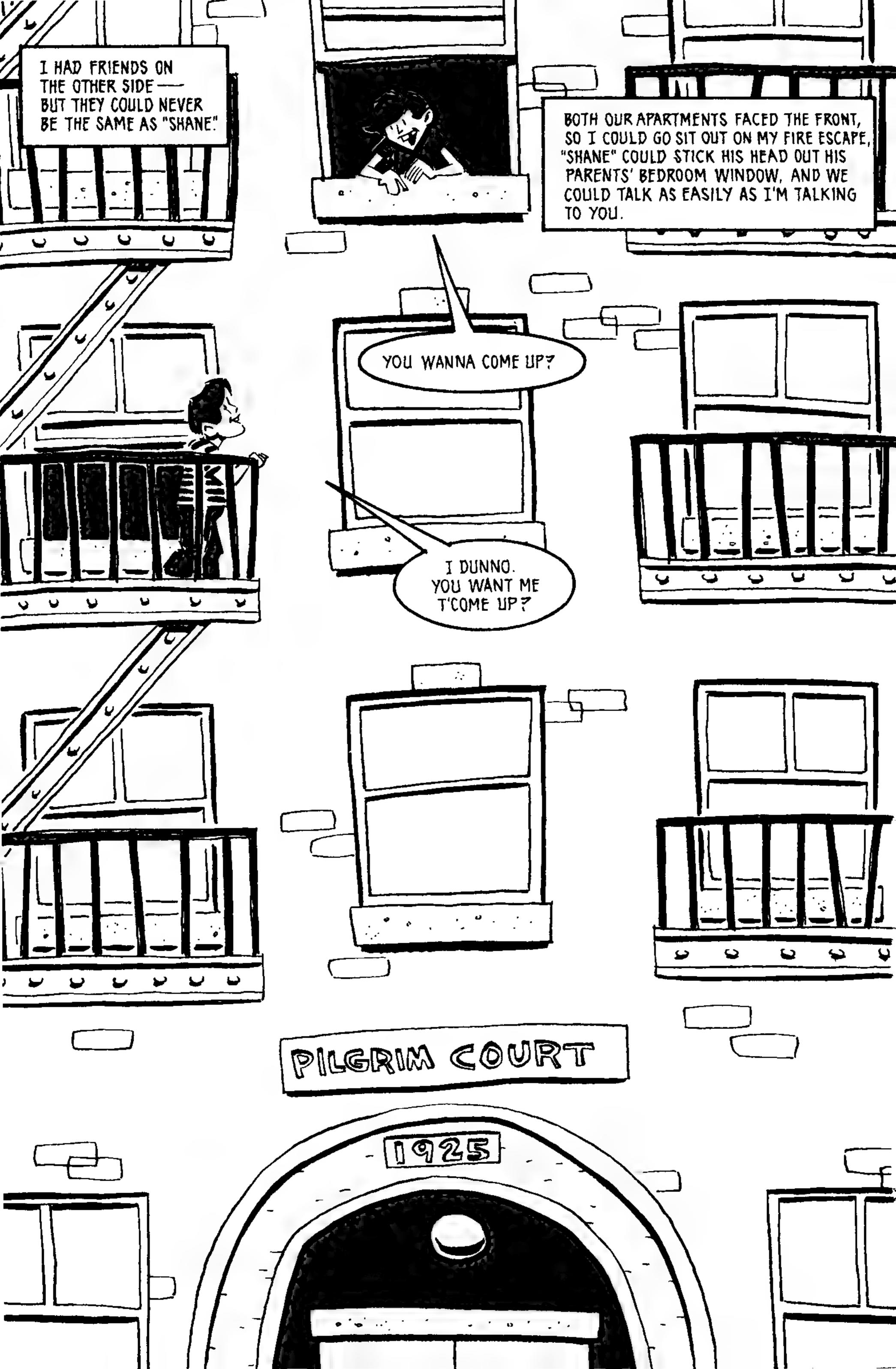


ANYWAY THE THING OF IT IS MY FIRST ENCOUNTER W TH THE POLICE LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON ME TO THIS DAY, IF A TRAFFIC COP SO MUCH AS LOOKS AT ME CROSS EYED OR FONE OF THOSE OFFIC OUS CHEST PUFFING STATE TROOPERS PULLS ME OVER ON THE JERSEY TLRNPIKE -LICENSE AND REG STRATION 80Y I TLRN NIO A SPLUTTERING ST. ITERING GU .T K DDEN TWE VE YEAR OLD ITS ALL I CAN DO TO RESTRA N. MYSELF FROM CONFESSING TO EVERYTHING FROM THE LINDBERGH K DNAPP NG TO THE KENNEDY ASSASS NATION TO SCRATCH NG JP DOMINICK'S CAR

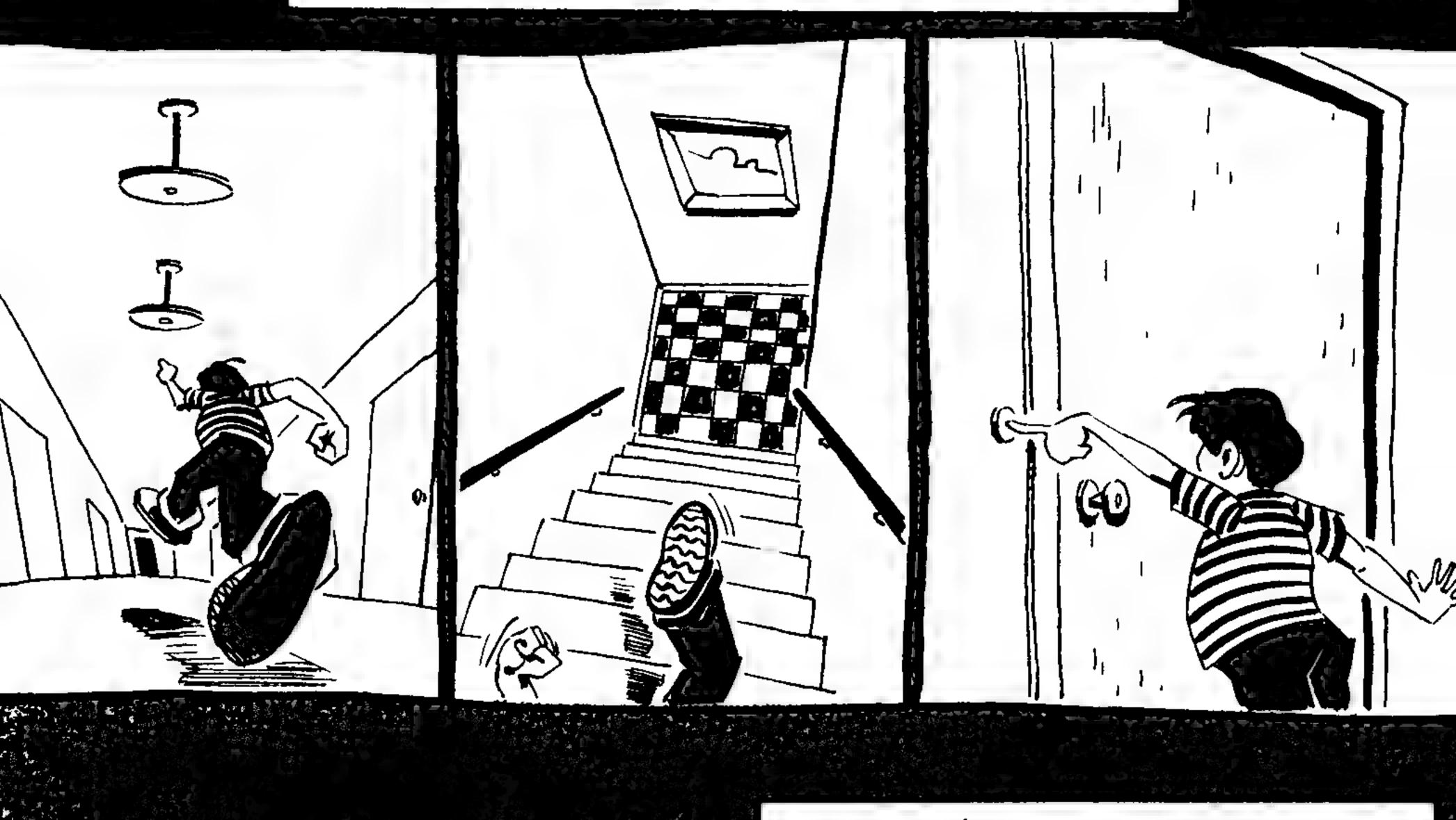




BEST FRIEND? BROTHER IS MORE LIKE IT WE'D KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE I MOVED INTO "PILGRIM'S COURT," WHEN I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD. I LIVED ON THE THIRD FLOOR. "SHANE" ON THE FOURTH MORE IMPORTANT, WE LIVED ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE BUILDING. THIS IS NOT A MINOR POINT. IN A PRE-WAR BROOKLYN APARTMENT BUILDING, EACH SIDE HAD ITS OWN SPECIAL ATMOSPHERE .. PARTS OF THE WHOLE, BUT DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT. KIND OF LIKE EAST AND WEST BERLIN



I COULD MAKE IT OUT MY DOOR AND UP THE STAIRS TO HIS PLACE IN ABOUT A MINUTE, WITHOUT GETTING WINDED.



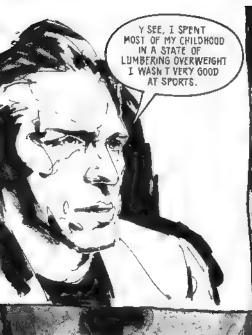
"SHANE" WASN'T HIS LEGAL NAME — HE WAS BORN JOSEPH ANTHONY DI PALMA; JUST "JOEY" TO ME, ALL THROUGH CHILDHOOD — BUT, BY OUR TEENAGE YEARS, NICKNAMES HAD BECOME NOT JUST EXTREMELY COOL, BUT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

MY NICKNAME (YES! YET ANOTHER ALIAS!)
WAS "WALLY" — WHICH DERIVED FROM
"WALLY WALRUS" — WHICH DERIVED, AT ABOUT AGE
THIRTEEN, FROM MY UNNATURAL LOVE OF THE
BEATLES' SONG "I AM THE WALRUS" — WHICH
I INSISTED ON PLAYING, OVER AND OVER AND
OVER, ON THE JUKEBOX AT OUR LOCAL PIZZA PLACE.













"CARL IS A
VERY BRIGHT BOY,"
THE TEACHERS WOULD
WRITE—

---- "BUT HE REALLY NEEDS TO TRY HARDER."





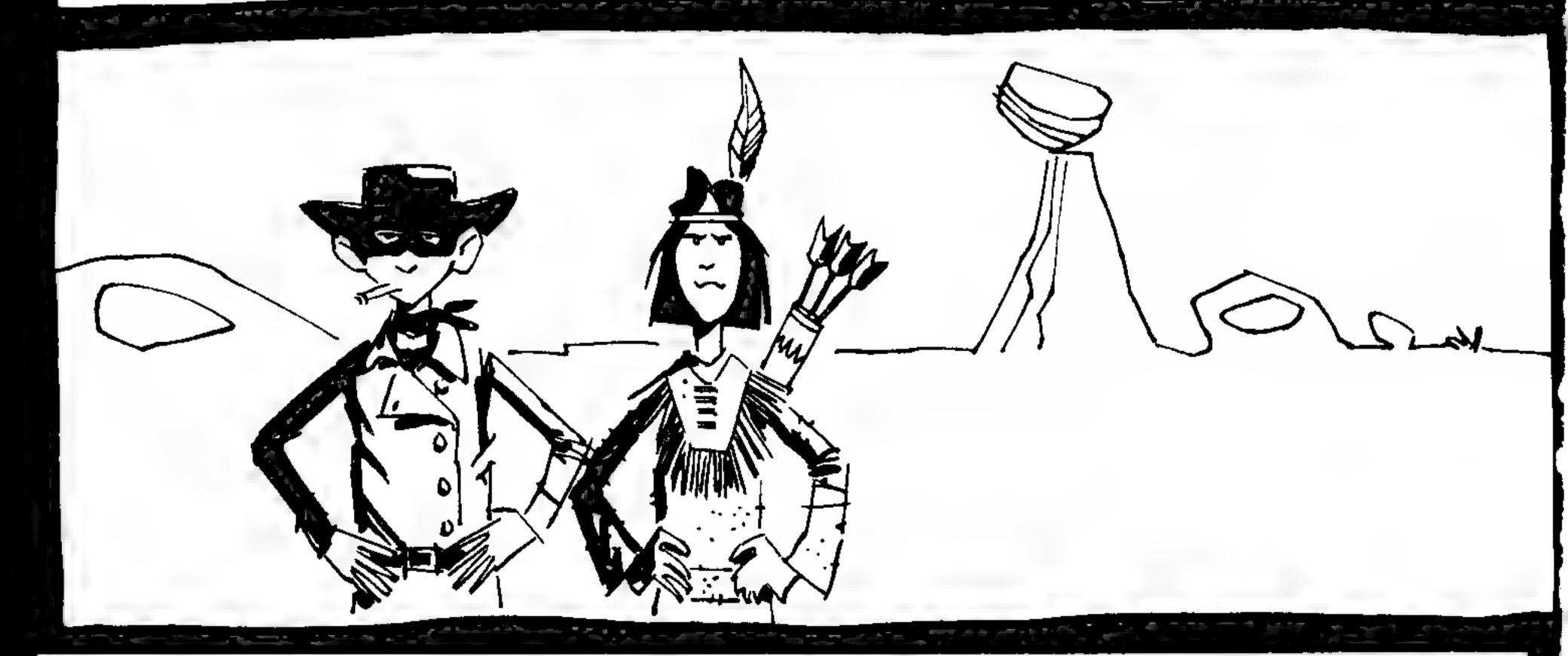
IT'S NO WONDER "SHANE" SEEMED SO INCREDIBLY PERFECT ----- AND I FELT SO STAGGERINGLY INADEQUATE.

BUT HEROES, OF COURSE, NEED SIDEKICKS. AND THAT'S THE ROLE I STEPPED IN TO FILL.



IF JOEY WAS THE MASKED RIDER OF OCEAN AVENUE, THEN I WAS THE LOCAL EQUIVALENT OF GABBY HAYES OR ANDY DEVINE. AT BEST, I WAS TONTO.





BUT THE SIDEKICK/HERO DYNAMIC WASN'T QUITE AS STRONG IN SEPTEMBER OF 1970. I HAD, HOWEVER LINCONSCIOUSLY, BEGUN CHARTING MY OWN ASCENT INTO HEROISM.



BY THE END OF SENIOR YEAR I WOULD FIND MYSELF ALONE ON THE PRAIRIE, DOING A PEYOTE-INDUCED MEDICINE DANCE, WHILE "SHANE" RODE OFF INTO THE SUNSET (PROBABLY WONDERING WHAT THE HELL HAD COME OVER TONTO).





NEXT MONTH: CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

VINCENT CARL SANTINI CONTINUES HIS RUMINATIONS ON GUILT AND INNOCENCE, THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY, THE INEVITABILITY OF DEATH, AND THE ETIQUETTE OF POLICE STRIP-SEARCHES. THROUGH A SERIES OF FLASHBACKS, CARL REVISITS SOME OF HIS LIFE'S MAJOR TURNING POINTS: CONFESSING TO HIS MOTHER THAT HE USES DRUGS; GOING FOR A RIDE WITH JACKIE THE JUNKIE; CALLING HIS FATHER FROM THE POLICE STATION. THE STORY FLOWS FROM SERIOUS TO HILARIOUS AND BACK AGAIN, LEADING SANTINI TO THE WRONG END OF A GUN AND THE QUESTION: SHOULD HE BREAK OUT OF JAIL, HAVE HIS BRAINS BLOWN OUT — OR BOTH?

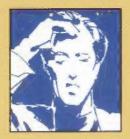


SIT BACK, RELAX... AND I'LL WEAVE YOU

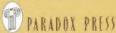
SOME LIES ABOUT MY LIFE... 99 -- VINCENT CARL SANTINI



STRAY DOGS, ILLICIT SUBSTANCES. AND THE BEATLES?



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THOUGHT SOMETIMES THAT YOUR PARENTS WEREN'T YOUR PARENTS AT ALL?



REMEMBER WHEN? VINCENT CARL SANTINI DOES ... OR AT LEAST, HE THINKS HE DOES. AND NOW HE'S ABOUT TO SPILL THE STORY OF HIS CHECKERED PAST-EXACTLY THE WAY HE WANTS TO REMEMBER IT.





BROOKLYN

